

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, XA, CU

SUBJECT: NOON BRIEFING: 11/18/77 - CUBANS IN AFRICA

MR. TRATTNER: LET ME JUST ALSO ADD THAT YESTERDAY HODDING TOOK SOME QUESTIONS ON THE NATURE OF THE CUBANS' INDICATION THAT THEY HAD INTENDED TO DECREASE THEIR MILITARY FORCES IN ANGOLA, AND QUESTIONS AS WELL ON THE LEVEL OF CONTACT AND TIMING OF THAT INDICATION TO US. WE HAVE LOOKED INTO THIS FURTHER, AND WE HAD INDIRECT INDICATIONS FROM THE CUBANS THAT THEY INTENDED TO DECREASE THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE IN ANGOLA. WHILE I CAN'T GO INTO ANY MORE DETAIL, I CAN SAY THAT THIS DID OCCUR BEFORE THE INVASION OF SHABA PROVINCE IN ZAIRE, WHICH I THINK WAS ONE OF THE QUESTIONS FROM YESTERDAY.

Q. AND ALSO --

A. THAT WAS LATER.

Q. YOU SAID THEY INTENDED TO DECREASE?

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A. YES. DECREASE.

Q. "INDIRECT" MEANS THROUGH A THIRD PARTY?

A. WELL, I REALLY CAN'T BE PRECISE FOR YOU, OZZIE. I WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE IT WITH THAT DESCRIPTION.

A. NOW CAN WE SWITCH TO CUBA?

AND LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION THAT DIDN'T OCCUR TO ME UNTIL THE BRIEFING ENDED YESTERDAY.

WITHOUT LOOKING UP THE WORDS, THE IMPORT OF WHAT HODDING HAD TO SAY IS THAT IF THE CUBANS KEPT SHIPPING MILITARY FORCES INTO AFRICA -- WE WOULD HAVE TO HOLD IN ABEYANCE OUR MOVEMENT TOWARD DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

AND AFTERWARD, I BEGAN TO THINK --

A. I THINK THAT IS THE IMPLICATION -- THAT WE HAVE SIMPLY GONE ABOUT AS FAR AS WE CAN GO.

Q. YES. BUT I WONDERED AFTERWARD IF THAT WASN'T IN CONFLICT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECLARATION SOME MONTHS AGO, THAT HE THOUGHT WE OUGHT TO BE ON SPEAKING TERMS, OR HAVE RELATIONS, WITH EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WHATEVER THEY WERE.

A. I DON'T SEE A CONFLICT, BARRY. WE HAVE AN INTERESTS SECTION THERE AND I DON'T THINK WE ARE ANYTHING BUT ON SPEAKING TERMS WITH THE CUBANS.

BUT I THINK WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT IS THE FURTHER UNCLASSIFIED

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PROGRESS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA, AND THAT, I THINK, IS WHAT HODDING WAS ADDRESSING YESTERDAY.

Q. WELL THEN, IF THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT WE WANT TO REMAIN ON SPEAKING TERMS WITH CUBA AND INDEED INTEND TO HAVE RELATIONS WITH THEM, WHAT WAS YESTERDAY'S DECLARATION OTHER THAN SOME SORT OF -- I DON'T KNOW WHAT -- SOME PUBLIC PROPAGANDA MOVEMENT? IN OTHER WORDS, HOW COULD YOU INFLUENCE THE CUBANS IF YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE RELATIONS WITH THEM ANYHOW? WHAT IS THE FIST BEHIND THE THREAT?

A. I DON'T THINK THERE IS ANY. I WOULDN'T LIKE TO PUT IT IN THOSE TERMS, BARRY. I THINK THAT YESTERDAY'S STATEMENT WAS, WAS ONE OF THE THOSE MILESTONES ALONG THE ROAD THAT COUNTRIES FOLLOW IN DRAWING CLOSER TOGETHER, AND NO ONE SAID THAT THIS IS AN EASY, CERTAIN OR QUICK PROCESS. OBVIOUSLY WHEN THINGS OCCUR, SUCH AS WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT HERE,

AN INCREASED MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA, THE PROCESS SLOWS. SOMETIMES IT IS HALTED. BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THE INTENT TO GO AHEAD WITH IT IS DIMINISHED.

Q. JOHN, I DON'T BELIEVE WE EVER GOT A SPECIFIC ANSWER YESTERDAY TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE CUBAN INFLUX INTO ANGOLA HAD ACTUALLY INCREASED OR THAT THIS WAS SIMPLY OR ESSENTIALLY A REFINEMENT OF PREVIOUS AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES?

A. MURREY, I GOT SOMETHING JUST BEFORE I CAME IN.

WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF MOZAMBIQUE, WHERE THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A SMALL INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CUBANS OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE INFLUX OF CUBANS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MOSTLY CONFINED TO ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA. THE TOTAL NUMBER OUTSIDE THOSE TWO COUNTRIES HAS NOT RISEN SIGNIFICANTLY.
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Q. EXCUSE ME. THAT IS NOT REALLY THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION.

A. AND WITH THE DEPARTURE OF CUBAN PERSONNEL FROM SOMALIA, IT MAY EVEN HAVE DECLINED SLIGHTLY.

NOW I HAVE ALSO SOMETHING I MIGHT BE ABLE TO ADD TO THAT.

Q. EXCUSE ME.

THAT LAST PART, YOU SAID WITH THE DEPARTURE OF CUBAN TROOPS SOMALIA MAY EVEN HAVE DECLINED SLIGHTLY?

Q. OUTSIDE OF ANGOLA.

Q. THAT IS OUTSIDE OF ANGOLA?

A. THAT'S RIGHT.

Q. NOT THE OVERALL TOTAL?

A. NO.

Q. 27 IS MORE THAN THEY HAD BEFORE OVERALL -- 27,000.

A. YES.

Q. THE FIGURES YOU USED IN JULY IN ANGOLA WERE 14,000 TO 15,000 AND BETWEEN 20,000 AND 25,000 TOTAL IN AFRICA.

A. THE LAST THAT WE SAID ABOUT ANGOLA BEFORE YESTERDAY I THINK WAS 19,000.
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Q. LET ME RE-ASK THE QUESTION I JUST ASKED YOU, WHICH WAS:
HAS THE NEW FIGURE RESULTED FROM AN INCREASED INFLUX OF
CUBANS INTO ANGOLA IN RECENT TIMES, OR IS IT A RECOMPUTATION
OR RECALCULATION OF THOSE WHO WERE THERE?

A. I THINK IT IS AN INFLUX INTO ANGOLA PRIMARILY, MURREY.
THAT IS WHAT I GET OUT OF THIS.

Q. OVER WHAT PERIOD OF TIME, JOHN?

A. I THINK IT WOULD HAVE TO BE AND I WILL ASK -- I HATE
TO PUT A TIME ON IT -- LET'S SAY ROUGHLY TWO OR THREE MONTHS
MAYBE.

Q. ON MONDAY WE HAD 19,000 CUBANS AND ON THURSDAY WE HAD
23,000 CUBANS.

A. THAT WAS, AS WE SAID YESTERDAY, BECAUSE WE DID NOT HAVE
ON HAND MONDAY THE LATEST REPORT THAT WE DISCUSSED YESTERDAY.

Q. THE LATEST REPORTS OF AN INFLUX THAT OCCURRED OVER TWO
MONTHS WERE NOT AVAILABLE UNTIL WEDNESDAY?

A. THAT IS ABOUT WHAT IT AMOUNT TO. BUT I SAY THAT THE TWO
MONTHS FIGURE IS JUST A GUESS ON MY PART.

Q. ON CUBA, IN THE PAST THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A KIND OF
SWING OR RANGE OF THE ESTIMATE BETWEEN 15,000 , 19,000
WAS THE LAST ONE. NOW YOU ARE SAYING FLATLY 23,000. IS
THERE ANY ROOM FOR ERROR EITHER WAY? COULD IT BE 2,000 ON
EACH SIDE OF THAT?

A. THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR ERROR. I THINK THEY ARE PRETTY
SURE OF THESE FIGURES AND I WOULD SAY THAT IT WOULD BE LESS
OF A SWING OF 2,000 EITHER WAY. HOW MUCH LESS, I DON'T KNOW.
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Q. JOHN, COULD WE HAVE THE QUESTION TAKEN PERHAPS FOR
CLARIFICATION ON THAT AND OTHER POINTS. HAS THE UNITED
STATES CHANGES ITS METHOD OF COMPUTING AND CALCULATING
NUMBERS OF CUBAN MILITARY AND OTHER PERSONNEL IN FOREIGN
COUNTRIES?

A. YOU ARE ASKING ME IF I CAN GET THAT FOR YOU. I WILL
CERTAINLY TRY TO ANSWER YOU, YES, TO THE LIMIT OF OUR
ABILITY TO DO SO. CHRISTOPHER

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